

Bestselling author of *People of the Lie*
and *The Road Less Traveled*

**M. SCOTT
PECK, M.D.**

A PSYCHIATRIST'S
PERSONAL ACCOUNTS of
POSSESSION, EXORCISM,
and REDEMPTION

**GLIMPSES OF
THE DEVIL**

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The legendary bestselling author and renowned psychiatrist M. Scott Peck, whose books have sold over 14 million copies, reveals the amazing true story of his work as an exorcist -- kept secret for more than twenty-five years -- in two profoundly human stories of satanic possession. In the tradition of his million-copy bestseller "People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil," Scott Peck's new book offers the first complete account of exorcism and possession by a modern psychiatrist in this extraordinary personal narrative of his efforts to heal patients suffering from demonic and satanic possession.

For the first time, Dr. Peck discusses his experience in conducting exorcisms, sharing the spellbinding details of his two major cases: one a moving testament to his healing abilities, and the other a perilous and ultimately unsuccessful struggle against darkness and evil. Twenty-seven-year-old Jersey was of average intelligence; a caring and devoted wife and mother to her husband and two young daughters, she had no history of mental illness. Beccah, in her mid-forties and with a superior intellect, had suffered from profound depression throughout her life, choosing to remain in an abusive relationship with her husband, one dominated by distrust and greed.

Until the day Dr. Peck first met the young woman called Jersey, he did not believe in the devil. In fact, as a mature, highly experienced psychiatrist, he expected that this case would resolve his ongoing effort to prove to himself, as scientifically as possible, that there were absolutely no grounds for such beliefs. Yet what he discovered could not be explained away simply as madness or by any standard clinical diagnosis. Through a series of unanticipated events, Dr. Peck found himself thrust into the role of exorcist, and his desire to treat and help Jersey led him down a path of blurred boundaries between science and religion. Once there, he came face-to-face with deeply entrenched evil and ultimately witnessed the overwhelming healing power of love.

In "Glimpses of the Devil," Dr. Peck's celebrated gift for integrating psychiatry and religion is demonstrated yet again as he recounts his journey from skepticism to eventual acknowledgment of the reality of an evil spirit, even at the risk of being shunned by the medical establishment. In the process, he also finds himself compelled to confront the larger paradox of free will, of a commitment to goodness versus enslavement to the forms of evil, and the monumental clash of forces that endangers both sanity and the soul.

"Glimpses of the Devil" is unquestionably among Scott Peck's most powerful, scrupulously written, and important books in many years. At once deeply sensitive and intensely chilling, it takes a clear-eyed look at one of the most mysterious and misunderstood areas of human experience.

Glimpses of the Devil: A Psychiatrist's Personal Accounts of Possession, Exorcism, and Redemption Details

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From Reader Review Glimpses of the Devil: A Psychiatrist's Personal Accounts of Possession, Exorcism, and Redemption for online ebook

Linda Lipko says

This is a fascinating look at two cases of Demonic Possession as witnessed by psychiatrist M. Scott Peck.

Blending science and religion, Peck emphatically states that possession is real and also rare.

In both cases where he assisted with the exorcism, there was a definite time in the life of the client when they made a choice to allow evil to overtake them and there then was a choice that had to be made to accept love and light.

While the subject matter is dramatic, Peck did not embellish or shock the reader into belief.

The book is well written and logical in presentation.

Anne Hawn Smith says

This is an extremely interesting book. The author, Dr. Scott Peck, is a well known psychiatrist and author. In his practice, he has seen situations in which modern medical thought is not sufficient to explain what is the problem for some of his patients. In People of the Lie he presented a number of situations in which either the patients or their family exhibited behavior that that was evil and yet they didn't suffer from a known mental illness. This book goes beyond those earlier stories to incidents of actual possession.

I met Dr. Peck when he came to our church for a weekend seminar and our small group came to know him very well. We were impressed with his wisdom and intelligence as well as his honesty and forthrightness.

In this book, he discusses cases of his which involved actual possession. He knew Malachi Martin, author of Hostage to the Devil and discussed some of these cases with him.

People today are reluctant to even entertain the notion of a personal devil and yet as far back as the earliest records almost every civilization has a belief in devils. It is only the last 75 years that people have rejected the idea, especially when their image seems to only include a person in red tights with a trident and horns. C. S. Lewis says that the devil is just as happy when people are obsessed with him as when they ridicule him. Either way, he is camouflaged and can go about his work.

This is a great book to read with an open mind and learn from.

David Mackey says

M. Scott Peck fascinates me. A psychiatrist who wrote widely acclaimed books (such as *The Road Less*

Traveled) who struggled with a number of personal demons (alcohol, nicotine, amorous affairs), who professed Christianity which at some times seems quite liberal but at other moments almost evangelical/charismatic in its nature.

In this book he discusses his start as an unbeliever in demonic spirits, his attempt to test the matter scientifically, and his eventual decision that the demonic does exist and his performing of two exorcisms.

The book felt choppy to me but seemed also an authentic attempt to express things that are difficult to understand which could result in public mockery, even the stripping of professional credentials.

I read this volume in part because I am also reading his *People of the Lie* which is a more psychological approach to the question of human evil.

S.L. Saboviec says

This discussion delves further into the details of the book than most of my reviews because I have some issues with the ethical behavior of the author of this book.

Though some might feel that a book recounting exorcisms is written on shaky foundation, I believe in the supernatural and, more specifically, the existence of evil spirits we call “demons.” I am not, however, a Christian, so I bring my own opinions to the reading of these stories, which is the impetus for this review. I believe that every spiritual explanation—from major religions to individual experiences—is like a blind man trying to describe an elephant. The observation touches on something true about the whole, but the interpretation misses the entire picture.

In *Glimpses of the Devil*, Dr. Peck, who is a psychiatrist and converted Christian, recounts two experiences where he acted as an exorcist. He holds these two cases up as proof of demonic possession. Enough evidence exists in what he presented that, if he has presented everything factually, I believe these are cases of true demon possession.

However, I disagree with his interpretation of events in two specific areas.

Glimpses of the Devil is described as a factual representation of events; however, it ends up as an autobiographical account of a man who decides, without religious or demonological training, to exorcise two patients. This becomes clear throughout the book as Dr. Peck wrestles with his decision. One of my chief concerns regarding all this is that he never asks, “Should I do further research into exorcisms beyond reading Malachi Martin’s books?”

Mr. Martin is widely criticized in the exorcist community as writing sensational books full of half-truths and for decidedly un-Christian-like conduct, such as several affairs. Dr. Peck goes so far as to claim that no other handbook for exorcisms exists beyond Mr. Martin’s, which is patently untrue. Dr. Peck’s ignorance of the best practices in dealing with demons is evident from the beginning.

The first case is Jersey, a girl who has been possessed since she was twelve. Dr. Peck and his team exorcise her, which goes well. He then spends three weeks with her in psychoanalytic therapy, preparing her for re-entering the world.

After the exorcism, Dr. Peck is in contact with her over the years. During one visit, she explains to him that the demons still talk to her, but she is able to ignore them. In one instance, she told them to “shut the **** up,” and they did. However, out of curiosity, Dr. Peck asks to hypnotize her, as he did in the past, and to speak to the demons through her. She agrees and the resulting conversation is confusing. Nothing particularly demonic happens; instead, the entity speaking through Jersey identifies itself as a clerk living in Anaheim. He ends the hypnotic session and sees her rarely after that, though she, at press time, is happy, healthy, and no longer possessed.

I am appalled. Shame on you, Dr. Peck, for opening the door to allow a demon to speak through Jersey. I won't be surprised if the ending to the story is that she ends up possessed again.

Look, I'm no expert, but I have read a few things and I have some common sense. One of the preeminent exorcists of our times, Father Gabriele Amorth, has given extensive precautionary information in *An Exorcist Tells His Story* and *An Exorcist: More Stories*. These two books are not pea-soup-spitting horrors but are thoughtfully written tradesman's books—discussions of the nuts and bolts and challenges facing exorcists. They could be about plumbing or IT development but are instead about exorcisms. At the time that Dr. Peck conducted his exorcisms, the books had not yet been written; however, I would expect a non-fiction published in 2005 to at least acknowledge the existence of Father Amorth's books.

In his books, Father Amorth advises, quite sensibly, against engaging a demon in conversation. Assuming you believe demons are creatures of inherent evil and you aren't interested in unleashing evil into the world, you can agree that you shouldn't talk to them. Why? Because they lie. Even if they're not lying about whatever you ask, how do you know that? You're begging to be manipulated. What is there to learn, other than that they're evil, which you already know?

It's an exciting, gripping, fascinating world to step into. The lure of talking to something not human is immense. It's no wonder the Catholic Church refuses to promote its work in the realm of exorcisms.

This deviation from “get the hell out of that woman” to “hey, guy, whatcha doin' in there?” becomes prominent in the second patient's exorcism. Dr. Peck is fascinated with the idea that Beccah is possessed by Satan, an evil creature millions of years old. He senses a giant, immovable snake, as old as the world itself, coiled supernaturally around or inside of his patient. He wonders why it has possessed her. He asks it questions. He hypothesizes why it won't leave her. He does everything except exorcise it.

I wasn't there. I don't know. Maybe it went differently, and his ruminations are for the book only. But the exorcism of Beccah took a subtle shift from the exorcism of Jersey. With Jersey, he very strongly orders the demons to leave for three days straight. With Beccah, he ends up falling to the floor weeping at one point and another team member must step in and complete the exorcism. Is it no wonder that it turned out the way it did?

I'm also uncomfortable with the conclusions that Dr. Peck has drawn, aided by Malachi Martin, about the reasons behind demonic possession. Both men claim that every possessed person is complicit in their possession, that to become possessed, one must open the door for that possession, even if only a crack.

When the first patient Jersey was twelve, her father molested her. She allowed him to do it because he claimed to be a medical doctor and was “examining” her after her appendix was removed. He held a PhD and was a practicing psychologist but was not a medical doctor.

Dr. Peck claims that at twelve years old, Jersey knew the difference between a psychologist and a medical

doctor. Though he doesn't outright blame her, he explains that in not protesting what her father did to her, she created a kind of cognitive dissonance that allowed the demons to gain a foothold. She willfully believed a lie, and therefore, she opened the door to being possessed.

Are you kidding me, Dr. Peck?

I have no idea why that poor girl was possessed, but the only proof the author had that her demonic interference started at twelve was her word while she was possessed. It could have been one of the demons speaking through her to hide the real timing and cause of the possession. Her bad behavior only starts manifesting in her twenties. Why did the demons wait so long?

And I just don't agree with the idea of Jersey bringing this on herself because she was molested. "Oh," Dr. Peck says, "you didn't bring the molestation on yourself; however, you did bring the possession on yourself."

In healing psychological trauma, it's important to identify and acknowledge all feelings. Thus in a rape, a victim might say, "I feel that I brought this on myself." While this may be a turning point for the victim, the turning point is because he or she is releasing that negative thought. A follow-up might be an acknowledgement that she didn't bring it on herself or perhaps that she could have taken a different route home but had no way of knowing what would happen. It is not suddenly a fact that the victim brought the horrific tragedy on herself just because she thinks she did. It's psychologically freeing—which we see in the case of Jersey—but that doesn't make it true.

This preoccupation becomes even more apparent in Beccah's case, and Dr. Peck's search for the moment of her possession may have distracted him from being useful to her. Beccah was found wandering six streets away from her home when she was eighteen months old. Though little is known of her mother beyond that she was seen by Beccah as evil, this is exceedingly atypical behavior by a child in that age range, as asserted by Dr. Peck himself. Non-traumatized children nine months to several years old are afraid of strangers and cling desperately to their mothers. That Beccah ran away from home before she could talk says that she was already maladjusted, due to her circumstances, well before she had a choice in the matter.

While it is important to note that everyone has a choice and that choice is important in defeating a demon, we are all victims of our circumstances. A woman may end up being narcissistic because she was genetically predisposed and her mother modeled that behavior; she may free herself from it by taking responsibility for her actions. Going in is not a choice, but coming out is.

The very definition of a demon is a creature that preys on human victims. Have we forgotten what victims are? They're victims. And it's not a far stretch to believe that supernatural creatures intent on anguish and destruction choose innocents. It's comforting to tell ourselves that we won't ever be targets because we don't do anything to invite evil into our lives, but that smacks of untruth.

I admire Dr. Peck's open discussions, including failings that he freely admits. The books was fascinating, but I'm cautious about naming the elephant. Whenever we delve too far into specifics when it comes to religion, we become distracted and unable to see the entire picture. Though it's obvious that "invoking the name of Jesus Christ" holds sway over demons, that doesn't prove that every piece of Christian dogma is correct. Exorcisms have been performed successfully for thousands of years across all cultures and religions, despite what the Catholic church might want people to believe.

I'm convinced that there's evil in the world. And sometimes, we can do nothing to stop being swept away by

it. Educating ourselves on all aspects of evil and opening ourselves to understanding beyond our own narrow worldview will aid in defeating it in our own lives and as collective humanity.

Also posted on my blog, [Magic and Mayhem Book Reviews](#).

Kirsten says

I feel a little unfair rating this book, since I'm apparently not anywhere near the intended audience. Peck is not going to convince anyone who doesn't already believe in actual demons and in Satan as an entity, and even those who believe in such things might find that this book stretches their credulity.

This book, as near as I can figure, expands upon two situations mentioned in Peck's earlier work, *People of the Lie*, where he encountered women in his psychiatric practice who he believed to be possessed. In the early eighties, Peck became interested in exorcism and possession and whether these could somehow be scientifically proven. In the process, he became acquainted with Malachai Martin, author of *Hostage to the Devil*. This already had my eyebrows shooting up, since Martin was a controversial figure and more than a little bit of a huckster. Martin eventually asked Peck to investigate the case of a young woman named Jersey, who believed herself to be possessed.

Peck meets Jersey, and almost immediately recognizes the symptoms of Borderline Personality Disorder, yet he uses hypnotism to speak directly to the "demons," and they convince him that there might be some truth to Jersey's belief. He agrees to continue to investigate the case. Soon after this, during a psychiatric interview, Jersey suddenly has what appears to be a psychotic break, exhibiting symptoms of schizophrenia, but this ends abruptly when Peck tells her to "cut it out." Peck finds this sudden change "breathtaking," and he takes it as evidence of possession. This is interesting, since I've read at least one account of a woman with BPD who suffered from extremely brief episodes of psychosis that usually resolved themselves within an hour. Anyway, Peck goes ahead with a deliverance (an intense prayer session designed to relieve the sufferer of demonic influences), and when that affords only temporary relief, he performs a full-on exorcism, which takes four days. At the end, there is a marked improvement in Jersey's condition, but Peck himself states that his initial assessment was that "at most, what the exorcism did was to transform a severe untreatable borderline personality into a severe treatable one."

At this point, my reaction as a reader was basically that I thought Peck was misinterpreting psychiatric symptoms as demon possession, but Jersey did seem to be helped by the exorcism, so maybe it was a case of "no harm, no foul." Then Peck does something I consider to be unconscionable.

Peck is of the belief that possession can only occur if the victim leaves the demons an opening. Because both he and Jersey have come to believe that Jersey was possessed sometime around twelve years old, Peck spends a lot of time trying to find out what happened that gave the demons a foothold. Gradually it comes out that after Jersey had her appendix out when she was twelve, her father sexually molested her under the guise of medically examining her. While her father had a PhD in psychology and had a practice of seeing his patients in a starched white coat, he was not a medical doctor. Jersey emphatically swears up and down that she thought he was, but Peck tells her that at the age of twelve, she should have known that he was not a medical doctor and that what he was doing was wrong. Thus, her decision to lie to herself was what gave the demons a foothold and caused her possession. Peck emphatically tells her that no one would blame her, and that it was perhaps a necessary lie -- but it was a lie nonetheless, and that's what caused her to be infested by demons for the following fifteen years. "During the twelve days that followed," Peck writes, "we were to go over her father's sexual molestation several times, elaborating on the unfairness of it as well as the unfairness that the devil had taken advantage of such a tiny and pardonable wrong choice. But I also emphasized during

those times that it had been, in fact, a wrong choice on her part. ... I repeatedly told her that God is truth, and truth is what is real. The choice to believe her father's lie because it was the less painful alternative was a choice to believe unreality. And unreality belonged to the devil.(p. 83)" I, frankly, have no words to respond to this, except that I consider it to be one of the most f-ed up things a therapist could tell a survivor of sexual abuse.

At any rate, this is getting long, but my main reaction on reading this case study and that of the other woman Peck exorcised, is that I'm glad that Peck stopped practicing as a psychiatrist in the mid-eighties in favor of the lecture circuit, and I hope he didn't infect too many other mental health professionals with his ideas.

Jeff says

Umm, very interesting. I think when I think of demon possession I am just so used to the "charismatic" responses of being "violent" that it's what I expected with this book, and though they were forceful in dealing with demons it showed me a different way of dealing with possession I never saw before.

It was an interesting read for sure, and it showed me the journey of one man who went from 99% sure there was no devil, to realizing 100% there is a devil from a psychiatrist's point of view. Very interesting indeed.

It also helped to identify some of the things we need to guard, and at the same time, what we need to deal with in our own lives, so we don't leave part of our lives open to the devil.

The book was less "glamorous" as hollywood makes exorcisms to be, but the one line that the author said was, "You had to be there...." He was there, and it made him realize there is a devil.

I think I would recommend this book to some, but not all. Trust me, not all would be able to read, and understand this.

Matt Evans says

Not as good as Road Less Traveled or People of the Lie, but still very, very interesting. What we have here is the transcript of two (or three, I forget) exorcisms. Demons show up. I remember that one of the demons expressed awe or wonderment at the fact that we're able to live in such vulnerable circumstances. (The earth is a tear drop circling a furnace, when you think about it.) Also, the demon's were under very strict regimentation. For any you Screwtape readers out there, this all will ring quite familiar.

Rachel says

Very, very fascinating. I'm not a huge believer in Satan, but this opened my mind a little on the subject of possession.

My favorite parts:

"I gave examples from my clinical practice of how love was not wholly a thought or feeling. I told of how that very evening there would be some man sitting at a bar in the local village, crying into his beer and sputtering to the bartender how much he loved his wife and children while at the same time he was wasting his family's money and depriving them of his attention. We recounted how this man was thinking love and feeling love--were they not real tears in his eyes?--but he was not in truth behaving with love." [pg 55:]

"Since the primary motive of the evil is disguise, one of the places evil people are most likely to be found is within the church. What better way to conceal one's evil from oneself as well as from others than to be a deacon or some other highly visible form of Christian within our culture." [pg 148:]

The most interesting thing about M. Scott Peck, M.D. is his credibility. He is a graduate of Harvard and Case Western Reserve and he was at first highly skeptical of this subject. While I may not be 100% convinced, Peck is the type of credible, mentally stable, intelligent source that I look for when researching a new subject. He's no religious nut. He encourages questioning and doubting. He's a Christian I can get on board with. Dammit, I just looked him up and he passed away in 2005. I would have liked to have dinner with the man.

Rebekah says

A therapist making a child feel at all responsible for her molestation? Making someone watch 32 hours of their own exorcism afterward? Sound ridiculous? After reading the first third of this book, I felt like lighting it on fire.

I don't know the former Dr. (?) Peck, but I couldn't help but feel his sadism shines in this work.

I really think this book will end up in my DNF file. This is the first time I've felt sickened and genuinely angry while reading a book in some time.

Benjamin Stahl says

After First Reading

This was a fantastic book. Peck is the first person to give us a proper account of exorcisms which is intelligently explained, completely and utterly convincing, and pretty damned scary. As a psychiatrist, he details his daunting experiences with two particular patients who claim to be possessed by a demonic entity. Using his expertise and medical knowledge, he is neither biased nor at all ignorant in his dealings with this

controversial subject. I won't say if he is successful or not, but I can tell you that in both cases he really does get glimpses of the devil, and manages to establish this terrifying privilege with nothing but medical expertise and a deft understanding of the human mind. The psychological triggers for one of the patients is truly startling.

After Second Reading

Yep. Pretty much what I said before. I admire Peck's bravery in publishing on such a misunderstood concept. I wouldn't be surprised if there were a lot of doctors in the psychiatric community who laughed behind his back. But Peck comes across as very down-to-earth. He's the best kind of Christian in that he still has the ability to doubt things and question them. All the same, while I do believe he speaks in earnest, some of this book probably should be taken with a grain of salt. (Oh, you like salt with your dinner? Well, then, a grain of something you don't like, you fucking smartarse, you). I found it a little silly how quickly Peck jumped to the conclusion that he was dealing with Satan himself. I suppose it's one of those having to *be there to understand it* kind of things.

On reading some less positive reviews for this book though, some questions were asked which I think could lead to answers quite as horrifying as the thought of demonic possession. Specifically the possibility that, through his own obsession with prodding these mysteries, Peck projected the idea of possession into his patients and this, in turn, led to the downfall of one of them. It is conceivable that someone could become convinced that they're possessed when really they are just schizophrenic or woke up on the wrong side of the bed or some damned thing. That would make Peck quite the villain.

But look here, I don't think that was the case. I think Peck probably was the genuine article, and I certainly can get behind his wistful proposition that such areas as this should not be pushed into the realm of fiction by medical professionals as they have been. Science and religion are worlds apart now, and that's unfortunate because either one dispelling the other is a dead-end road to understanding our place in the universe. There's just so many Atheists that one day God will be nothing more than a fictional fantasy like Hogwarts and unicorns and my imaginary girlfriend.

BookLady says

Wow! ¡Qué decepcionante libro! La idea de que un psicólogo/ psiquiatra diera un análisis serio sobre el perfil del poseído y las posibles diferencias con otras enfermedades mentales o manías sonaba interesante. Pero la realidad fue otra y me vi en la necesidad de interrumpir la lectura porque la siguiente mitad del libro fue más de lo mismo.

El autor es amigo del famoso jesuita, exsacerdote, exorcista Malachi Martin y presenta dos casos donde el autor realizó los exorcismos. Primero, presenta la historia personal y familiar de cada paciente y cómo concluye que están poseídos, procede a realizar el exorcismo con ayuda de un sacerdote de la iglesia más cercana. Reúne a un grupo de personas que considera que pueden ayudar a sostener al poseso durante el ritual y cuando es necesario, hace llamadas a Malachi para dar reporte y solicitar consejo.

Puff! Se me presentaron muchos problemas durante el desarrollo de sus "exorcismos", primero que el psiquiatra no era católico, sino ateo recién bautizado episcopal - metodista, segundo, no recuerdo la autorización por parte de la Iglesia católica y del obispo o cardenal para realizar supuestos exorcismos y tres, no es una persona con entrenamiento teológico y espiritual, un hombre con altos estándares morales, éticos y espirituales para realizar semejante ritual sin autorización de la Iglesia Católica. En resumen, el hombre se saltó varios puntos importantes que demanda el ritual y la Iglesia Católica. Después de haber leído a los Padres de la Iglesia y su filosofía escolástica (San Buenaventura, Santo Tomás de Aquino, San Agustín, etc)

algunos tratados como De Malo y Suma Teológica, algunos libros sobre otros exorcistas como el Padre Fortea o al Padre Amorth, encuentro decepcionante la ligereza con que se trata el tema en este libro. No pude terminar el libro y no lo recomiendo si se busca un contenido interesante.

Art says

In this book, the author definitely hits a road less traveled (pun intended). Peck talks about how he became interested in the possibility of demonic possession (he was quite skeptical at first), his relations with the controversial Malachi Martin, and two patients he believes were demonically possessed. The book doesn't involve over-the-top "Exorcist" type of things. However, it is disturbing and creepy in parts. Jersey, Peck's first patient, is a twenty something who is severely neglecting her children and dabbling in a spiritualist cult. Peck is successfully able to "treat" her. Beccah, patient two, is a multi-millionaire married to an abusive crook. Raised Jewish, Beccah eventually converted to Christianity. As a very young girl she also became obsessed/possessed by an "evil book." As an adult, a depressed Beccah develops a thing for shady stock trading, lying, and self-mutilation. The mutilations she would perform with specially ordered "Nazi knives." Beccah's story doesn't end too well. Controversial, well-written, thought provoking.

David Ward says

Glimpses of the Devil: A Psychiatrist's Personal Accounts of Possession, Exorcism, and Redemption by M. Scott Peck (Free Press 2005) (265.94). The author, who is an actual psychiatrist, believes that he has met the devil face to face. This book is two accounts of his work as an exorcist in cases of demonic possession. I'll bet that wherever he went to med school kind of keeps this on the down low, huh? My rating: 4/10, finished 2006.

Catherine says

I need to just step away from the crazy.

Heather says

Worst book I've read on the subject. Ever. Really bad. No stars.
